

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 20. 1691.

Gentlemen, For the sake of a disconsolate Gentleman, I presume to desire you to Answer the few following particulars, who

about Seven or Eight of the Clock at Night, saw, or
he saw an Apparition in the likeness of a Man walking
him, which pursuing him three times about a Close, at the
time spake to him many weighty words; among which
told him to Repent of a Crime which he had Com-
mitted, mentioning the Time and Place, and the Person who
was privy to it, who is gone a Year since to Ireland as an
The young Gentleman being very much Troubled
it, desires to know whether this be a good or bad Spi-
rit, what it may be? and whether it is necessary for him
and his sayings? and whether it is better for him to dis-
close the Crime or no, which to conceal, he bound himself
to an Oath? and whether this might be the Spirit of that
man which was privy to it, (which the young Gentleman is
told that it is) if by Chance dead in War? Pray be
particular as you can, for the satisfaction of the Per-

son. That Spirits have sometimes really appear'd to
Mortals in the World, is amongst all sober Men beyond
Controversie, and were of old taken Notice of, as may
rationally conclude from that Scripture, Luke 24. 37.
Here 'tis said, the Disciples were afraid, and supposed
they had seen a Spirit. If our Querist wou'd have been
surely'd, he shou'd have felt whether it had been a Sub-
stance, or only a Body of Air, as was advis'd Mr. Earl
of Rochester about 57 Years since, who once try'd, but
his Arms met as if he had grasp'd at Air. We know not
what our Querist's Crime may be, but we think he ought
to make what Restitution he is able in Case of Injury: If
he be depriv'd of that Opportunity, let him make his Con-
fession to God; if it be a Case of Murder, we don't find
that he is Obliged to deliver up himself to the Law, but
to spend his Life in a continu'd Act of Repentance. If we
knew the particular sin, we cou'd be fuller in our Ad-
vice; but sure we are, his binding himself by Oath is not
Obligatory, if the Mischief of Concealing be greater than
that of Confessing; and 'tis almost impossible, let the Sin
be what it will but it must be so. 'Tis very probable,
the Person be not Melancholly, but 'twas the Spirit of
his Friend; For we read of some that have been so De-
prived as to make Solemn Covenants with their living Friends,
to appear unto them after their Death, of which we
have an instance in one Mr. Watkinson, who formerly
lived in Smithfield, who told his Daughter, (taking her
leave of him, and expressing her fears that she should
never see him more) that should he dye, if ever God
did permit the Dead to see the Living, he would see her
again: Now after he had been dead about half a Year,
on a Night when she was in Bed, but could not sleep,
she heard Musick, and the Chamber grew lighter and
lighter, she then saw her Father by the Bed-side, who
said, MAL, Did not I tell thee I wou'd see thee agen? and
so discours'd with her upon several weighty Matters,
and vanisht. But we shall not enlarge here, A Member

of our Society having almost finish'd a Treatise of Unbodied
Spirits, which will be publish'd in three Weeks at the fur-
thest. But as to this present Relation, it looks so dark,
that our whole Society has thought fit to Advertize the
Party concern'd, that if he pleases to send two or three
Lines by the Penny-Post, directed to Mr. Dunton at the
Raven in the Poultry, and therein to signifie the Time
and Place where he will be, the Society will appoint
some one of their Members to meet him with further
Instructions what to do --- and one who will also go
with him, if possible, to see and speak with this Spi-
rit. And they do hereby promise him all the Friendship
and Secrecy he can expect at their hands: But the Letter so
directed must be Writ in the same Hand as this that gives
the Account, thereby to prevent Mistakes or Abuses, which
may otherwise be put upon either Party by any other

Person. Let the Querist send as soon as he pleases, and
mention the Time and Place a day beforo-hand, that he
mayn't be disappointed of his Expectations.

Quest. 2. It was Observed in this City, upon the Night
for the Publick Rejoycing about the Surrendring of Limerick, (which was October the 13th.) that there was a
Bonfire kindled after Twelve a Clock, and Persons very merry
thereat --- the Query is --- Whether it was for the Surrendring
of Limerick, or for the Anniversary Birth of the late King
James the second, he being born also about the same hour, as
is supposed.

Answ. 'Tis an unpardonable Folly to believe that any
one can Rejoyce for the beginning of Unhappiness, or the
Commencement of such a Life as was unhappily byass'd
into Misery, and by such Persons too as by their Princi-
ples were accessary to it. But if after all, such Monsters
can pretend to be Merry, 'tis but as unaccountable as
their Sorrow, for living under the Protection of such a
Crown as woud render 'em more happy than their
Wishes. But their Zeal (if so) has made 'em mistake
a day, the late King being Born on the 14th. of October,
about Twelve at Night. — Limerick is Surrendred!
and to the Happiness too both of its Friends and En-
emies, if every thing be impartially consider'd; and every Englishman has Cause to rejoice, unlets a few ridling
Gamesters that value no Publick Loss like that of their
private Loui-d'ores about the Surrender.

Quest. 3. One of a Sanguine Complexion being married
to a Husband, who soon after went upon a Trading Voyage
for Virginia, intending to return back in a Tears time, but
hath been absent from her for above these Eight Tears; nei-
ther hath she received any Letter from him in all the time,
and not knowing whether he be dead or alive, but by uncer-
tain reports, she desires to be inform'd whether she may law-
fully marry another Man?

Answ. The Law provided formerly seven Tears, after
which it suppos'd the Man dead, but since Navigation and
Commerce are so well settled, a less time is requir'd, be-
cause Advices arrive much sooner and more certain than
formerly; if she means by lawfully, according to our
Law, she may Marry another, but we can't Promise her
Free by the Law of God, which no where makes such an
Exception. We have several Instances of this Nature,
as the Husbands distance and silence for above the time
the Law has prescrib'd, and of the Womans marrying
another, after which her first Husband came home, and
Sued the other for his Wife, and upon Tryal, the
Judges gave her the Liberty of taking which she wou'd;
and of some that have had their Wife again, and turn'd
the second Husband off. Thus the Law has done, we
can lay no more, but desire her to secure the Quiet of
her Conscience, and advise with the Ecclesiastick Authori-
ty, since the other gives her the Liberty she wants.

Quest. 4. An homunculus, &c? the Querist knows the
rest.

Answ. Nequaquam.

Quest. 5. I want to be resolved what kind of Creature
that is which the Scripture calls a Dragon, for I cou'd
never yet be satisfyed about it?

Answ. Dragons are of divers sorts, scal'd and unscal'd,
of divers Colours, grey, reddish, and variegated, and of
Natures Poysous and not Poysous, Terrene and
Marine. Lucan in his Pharsalia has a Curious Enumera-
tion of 'em; where he gives Account of the great An-
noyance they gave the Roman Army, as they pass'd
through the Desarts: Some are of prodigious magnitude
and length, witnes the Skin of one now in the Tower of
London: I my self saw the Skin of one, call'd an Am-
phisbaena, about five Foot long, with short Leggs, and
the Skin about three Foot over, it was shap'd almost
like an Oval Table, with a Head at either end, pretty
large, and shap'd like the Head of ordinary Snakes or
Adders. Some Heathen Authors mention very strange Ac-
counts

coutis of such as have been kill'd, and hang'd up in publick Places. History speaks of one that had devour'd a whole Stag, Horns and all. — In the Life of *Attillus the Roman General* is describ'd a prodigious *Dragon or Serpent*, which by its very *Breath infected the Air*, and destroyed the Circumjacent Inhabitants, several Devices were used to destroy it, but in vain, 'till they had invented *Engines to cast great Stones at it*, by which it was destroyed; and to great was the Deliverance, that an *Ovation or small Triumph* was made for it. In *Batier's Chronicle*, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, there's mention made of a small Wing'd Dragon. *The Dragons in the Waters*, mention'd in Sacred Writ, is believ'd to be *Crocodiles and Alligators*: As for the *Land-Dragons* mention'd there, we refer our Querist to the Description and maner of Annoyance of those Dragons mention'd in *Lucan's Pharsalia*, which compar'd with the terrible Effects of the other, will give the best light into the Question we can meet with. The Devil is call'd a *Serpent* and a *Dragon* in Scripture, perhaps not so much because he ruin'd Mankind in the shape of a Serpent, as for the pernicious Qualifications of such Creatures, which are now destroy'd every where but in the vast Deserts of Arabia, and a few more places; and perhaps it may be question'd within these two or three hundred Years, whether there ever was such a Creature as a *Wolf*, because they are alio mortali destroy'd by reason of their Mischiefs in all Countreys.

Quest. 6. Upon my Wifes Conception I am immediately sick, and to continue every Morning 'till she is quick, and bear equal Pains with her whilst in Labour: This is master of fact, pray your Opinion of the Reason thereof?

Answ. Agues and several Diseases the Learned say, are cured by *Transplantation*, of which divers Authors have writ; and some woud from hence infer a Reason for such Instances as this in the Question, but we think it foreign to the Matter. Sir *Kenelm Digby* has very learnedly treated on the Nature of *Sympathy* betwixt the particulars of one and the same Principle, which comes very near the Question, and to which we refer our Querist. — Our Thoughts upon it are these, That the *Semen* has potentially an Idea of every particular part of Humanity, and the *Imagination* in the Generative Crisis may be so great as to fix the Idea a great deal stronger than Naturally it is, even so far as to retain a sensible Communication to or from the *whole Mass* from whence it is separated, so that whether the whole or the part suffers, the same is Communicated to the other by the aforesaid sense of the *imaginary Impression*.

Quest. 7. There being a strange Story of an Apparition to some Souldiers in Scotland, mention'd in several News-Letters, you are desired to give your Opinion of it?

Answ. In the *Essay of recording Memorable Providences*, we have an Instance much like this: At *Meenen* there appear'd a Person all in white, with a Mitre on his Head, being follow'd with two more in black, after him came *four or five Squadrons*, who drew up as if they intended to storm the Town; the Souldiers there refu'd to stand their Centry, having been so affrighted that some of them fell down in their Posts; these *Spectres* appeared every Night in *June, 1682*, but as to the present Instance 'tis very probable that 'tis an idle Story, or at most a Confederacy, or an Assumption of *Warlers*, a kind of Wizards very frequent in that Countrey.

Quest. 8. It hath been my misfortune to be seduced into a very great sin, and not only so, but to make the most solemn Oaths and Promises to continue in it; if I break 'em, I'm Perjur'd, if I continue in't, I'm in as ill a Condition: Pray your Advice what way to take in it?

Answ. A Promise, Oath or Obligation, to do an ill thing, binds not at all; for 'tis not only *false Words*, but ill Actions that are *Lyes, being Deviations from Truth or Equity*: To Vow to do an ill thing, and perform it, is a greater Complication of Guilt, because by so doing you *Patronize a Vow of Injustice*, and at the same time break some other Command to keep your Promise, which was Null as soon as made; but by breaking such a wicked Oath, you honour the *Truth*, and show not only your abhorrence of prosecuting a wicked Vow, but do in some measure manifest a Repentance for a Breach of the Third Command, when you took the *Name of God in Vain*. By breaking your Oath you Commit no

Sin, because your Oath binds you not; but by ing it you Commit many sins at once, and do as in you lies to habituate it.

Quest. 4. What ought one rightly to think of such Divers as have freely Communicated with the Church of Eng to keep the Places into which they were put by the late James, who now will by no means hold Communion with same Church?

Answ. We ought to think, 'tis possible the keeping Places was not their only or great Reason for Communicating, but something else; 'tis better and safer to err upon the right hand than upon the left; 'tis the proper Office of a Christian not to Judge others but himself. There are many Actions which appear ill that will one day be found good, and so many Actions which appear ill that upon a just Tryal will be found otherwise, than impossible to Censure other Mens Actions now, without Condemning our own.

Quest. 9. Gentlemen, There's a young Woman has set Affections upon a Young Man, and by means of some Friends of hers has made him acquainted therewith, which he braces, but will not Marry her without the Consent of Parents, which he's assured neither of 'em can obtain: His Resolution is earnestly desired in this Case, whether he lawfully in foro Conscientiae Marry her without such Consent? This Solution will not admit of delay, so that are desired to Answer it in next Tuesday's Mercury, reason some of their Friends, whose Advice they craved this difficulty, suspended their Judgment, and recommended to your determination?

Answ. You'll find a full Answer to this Question Vol. 3. Numb. 10. Quest. 3.

¶ Several of those Instances and Questions lately sent us, are already Answer'd in those 12 Numbers now in the Press that Compleat our *Third Volume* which said 12 Numbers, with a Preface and Index will be Published next Thursday, where you'll all find those *NEW PROPOSALS* mentioned in *Mercury 5. Vol. 4.*

We having receiv'd several late and strange Instances about Apparitions, Spirits, and finding the Age full of *Hobbism, Sadducism, or Disbelief* of such things, have thought fit to reserve 'em all together for one Paper, which will come out very speedily.

The Question about Preaching without Notes, is fully Answer'd in the 12 Numbers that will be Published next Thursday.

We cannot find those Questions about Religion, mention'd in a Letter sent us last Night; but if we cou'd, we suppose the Querist is already Answer'd in one of those Rules laid down in our 2d. *Project*.

Advertisements.

The History of the *Jacobites of Egypt, Lybia, &c.* their Origine, Religion, Ceremonies, Laws and Customs: With an Account of the *Jacobites of England*. Done by a Person of Quality. Printed for, and Sold by *Eliphal Faye* at the *Bible* on the North-side of the Royal Exchange, and *R. Baldwin* at the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-lane*.

¶ In *Plow-yard*, the third Door in *Grays-Inn-lane*; lives *Dr. Thomas Kirleus*, a Collegiate Physician, and Sworn Physician in Ordinary to King *Charles the Second*, until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Busines) undertakes to Cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Nose, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leprosies, and Venereal Disease, expecting nothing until the Cure be finithed: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. The Drink is 2 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleane the Body of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropies, Gours, Scurves, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With another Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Distempers without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion to all that writes or comes for nothing.